Wider FBI Role Opposed By Mitchell

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Reuter

MIAMI BEACH, Fla., July 27—Attorney General John N. Mitchell said today that well-intentioned proposals to give the FBI greater powers in investigating local crimes could indirectly lead to creation of a national police force.

He noted that opposition to such a move has long been expressed by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover despite suggestions that his agents be given legal authority to investigate crimes now reserved to local law enforcement agencies.

Escalating the FBI's powers in this way could lead to "conflict of jurisdiction, erosion of state and local authority, and undue flow of power to Washington," Mitchell said in a speech to the Florida Sheriffs Association.

"The Nixon administration is opposed to any of these possibilities," he said.

"However well intentioned," he went on, "these proposals constitute, in my view, the kind of step toward a national police, or federal control of police, that American citizens, including their police, do not want."

Mitchell acknowledged that no one was advocating creation of a national police force or federal control of police activities as such, "but often freedoms are lost by inches."